ETCHINGS

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JOHN SHIRLOW

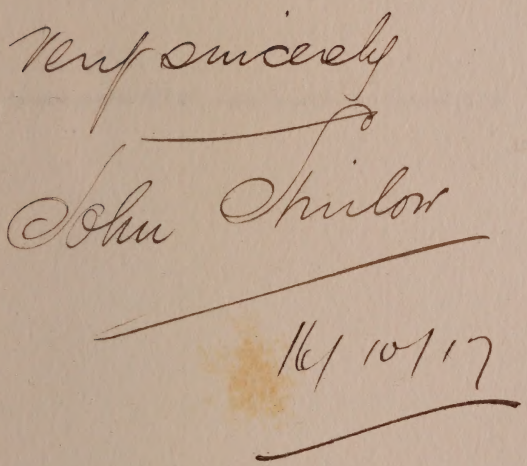
signed

ETCHINGS

BY

JOHN SHIRLOW

WITH INTRODUCTION BY
SYDNEY URE SMITH



SYDNEY;
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TO MY FRIENDS
MR. and MRS. R. H. CROLL

INTRODUCTION

THE characteristic quality of John Shirlow's etchings is their strong masculine individuality. His subjects are seen broadly and simply—often in two tones only. His foregrounds have that depth of tone only obtainable with very deep biting. Shirlow handles a copper-plate courageously, and there is rarely any evidence of hesitancy in his work. He has worked out every problem himself with the same untiring spirit with which he built his own press and manufactured his etching tools.

It is typical of the man that he avoids the generally accepted way of making an etching. There exists a "Shirlow" method of making little notes from nature—simple, almost crude, pencil sketches with numbers marked all over them to indicate the strength of tones ultimately required; but, while they may remain "quaint" to the casual observer, to John Shirlow they are part of an elaborate, preconceived plan of transferring nature's moods to his plate.

Invariably he works direct on the copper out of doors, and reverses his subject without the aid of a mirror. Only those who practise the art know how extremely difficult it is to accomplish this successfully.

Shirlow was born in Victoria on December 13, 1869. He started etching in 1893 and has worked unceasingly ever since, exhibiting his work from time to time in the Victorian Artists' Society. It is only comparatively lately that the value and sound artistic merit of his etchings have been fully appreciated. He has, at last, come into his own and, after many years of careful, painstaking study, his prints are now eagerly sought. He has etched sixty-five plates,

many of which have since been destroyed as the editions became exhausted.

One of Shirlow's finest plates is, I think, "The River," reproduced in this little book (Plate II.). This etching has a quality about it that will stand the test of time. It is simply observed in two tones. The delicate grey of the city in the distance is a fine contrast to the rich velvety tone in the foreground. The background is needled with great dexterity; it is not merely flat, but has an elusive atmospheric quality peculiar to distant buildings. The foreground is most interesting, and one's eye is led into the picture up to the centre, which is the darkest note. There is nothing meretricious about this picture. Like all true works of art, its quiet charm grows on one. Sincerity is the outstanding feature of John Shirlow, the man. It is that which gives the value to his Art, for a man can only be himself. Appreciation of his subject is reflected in Shirlow's etchings, and it is this genuine love of his craft that makes his work worth while.

One will not find clever technique or evidence of "slickness"; his technique, carefully analysed, has its faults. He suggests tone by curious, fumbling lines, deeply bitten, which sometimes are not pleasing in themselves. The English Art Schools have produced many etchers whose technique is irreproachable. Faultless craftsmanship, however, is not everything, and Shirlow has something far finer in his work than mere technique.

He has a broad and generous understanding of nature, and has approached her with reverence and a certain humility. He wishes to etch his subject because he loves it. Melbourne should be grateful to him for contributing such an interesting and valuable record of her beauty.

SYDNEY URE SMITH

ETCHINGS BY JOHN SHIRLOW

I.

CENTRAL RAILWAY STATION, Melbourne (1910)

SHARROW
1910

II.
THE RIVER

SHIRLOW
1902

III.

THE LAW COURTS, Melbourne (1908), including a portion since demolished

SHIRLOW
1908

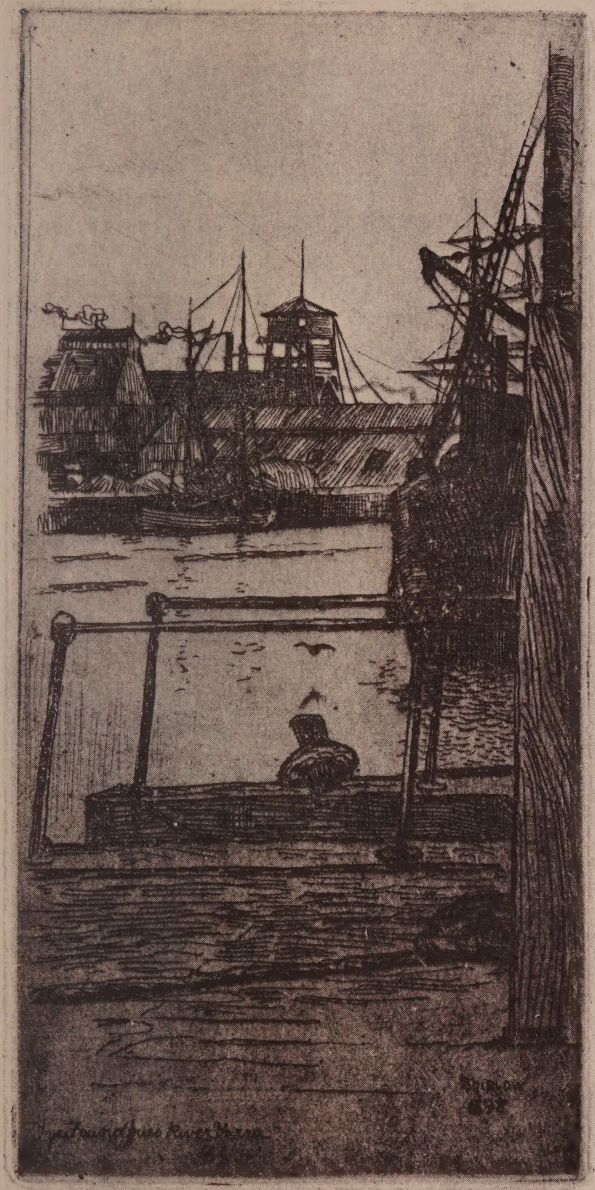
IV.
THE CITY—Melbourne from South Yarra, 1915

SHIELDS
1913

V.
THE SLUM

VI.
FROM IVANHOE, looking towards Melbourne

VII.
TYNE FOUNDRIES, River Yarra



VIII.

ST. MARY'S, West Melbourne

1907

IX.
A PORTRAIT

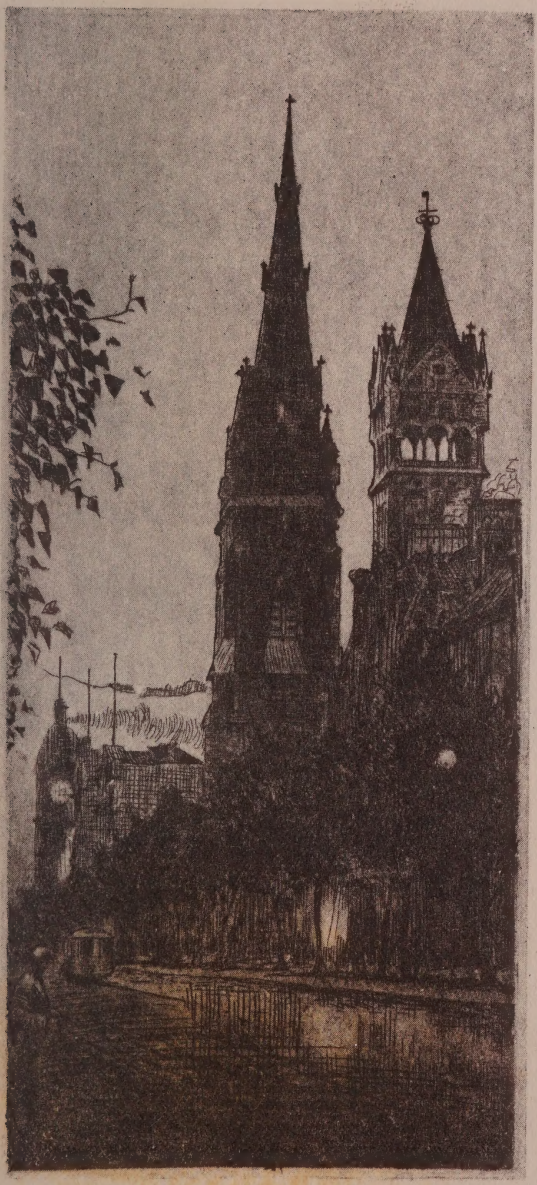
R. H. CROLL
SHIRLOW
1917

X.
THE FISHMARKET TOWER, Melbourne

SHIRLOW 1914

XI.
THE IRON BRIDGE, South Yarra

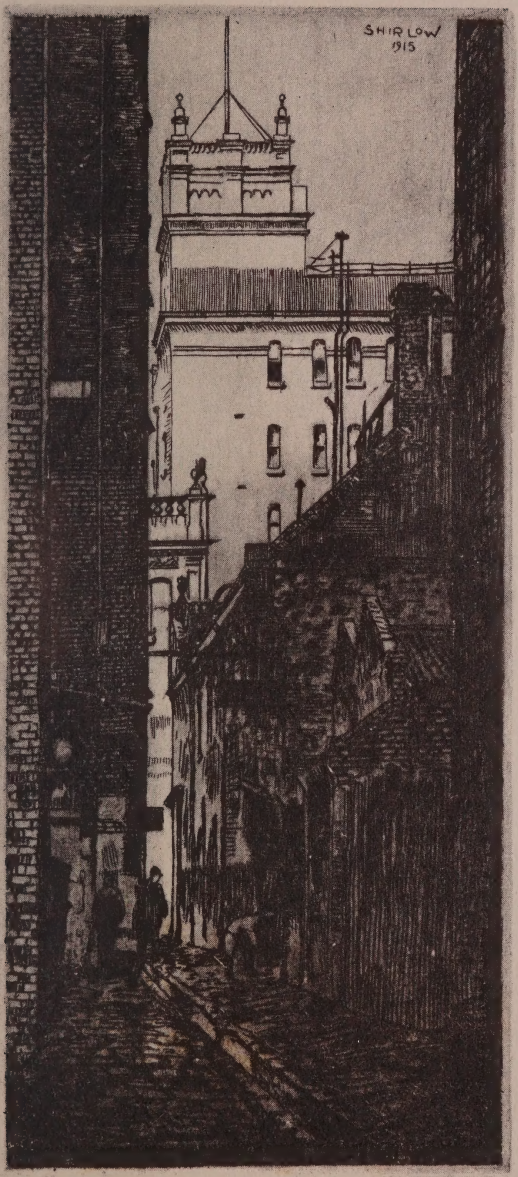
XII.
THE GOTHIC SPIRE



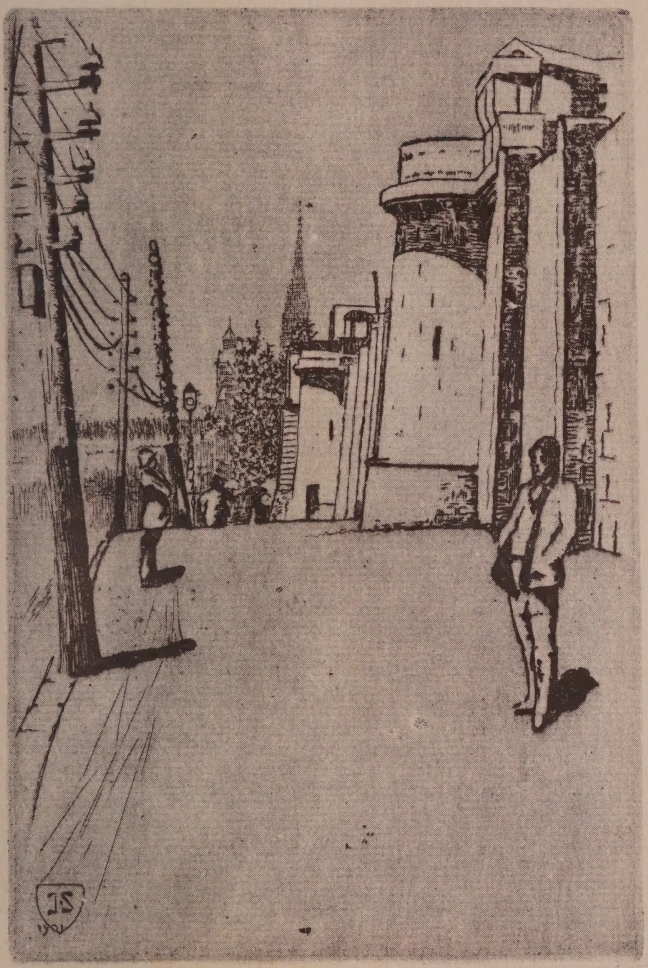
XIII.

LITTLE DONCASTER, showing the Doncaster Tower, since demolished

XIV.
THE CHINESE QUARTER, Latrobe Place


SHIRLOW
1915

XV.
THE GAOL. From the *Five Etchings*



XVI.
THE SAW MILL

XVII.
CARRUM BRIDGE

SHIRLOW
1907

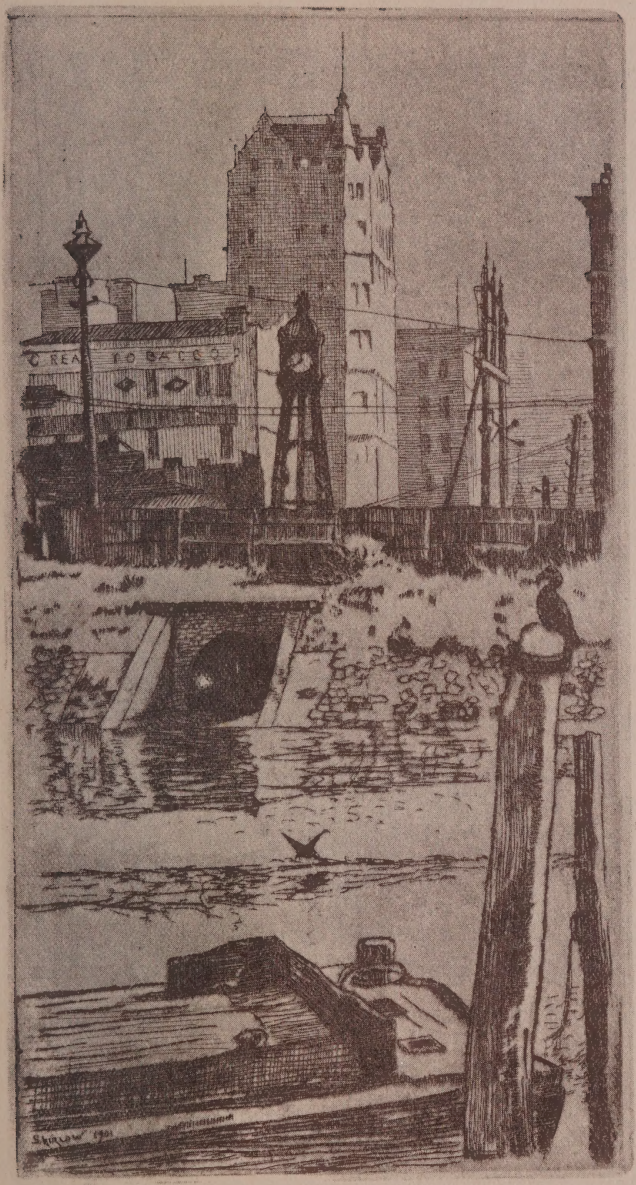
XVIII.
MELBOURNE FROM SOUTH YARRA, 1915

SHIRLOW 1913

XIX.
BIG BOURKE STREET

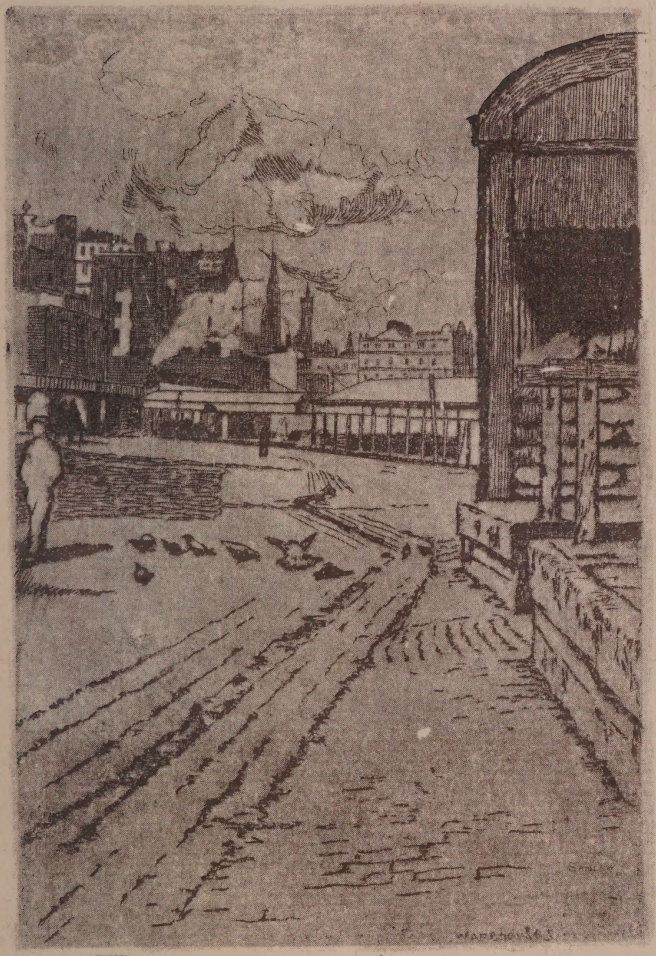
MYERS
THORNE
ROCK
VAUDE

XX.
THE RAILWAY CLOCK


TREA TO BATES

XXI.

WAREHOUSES, MELBOURNE WHARVES, 1902



XXII.
VIEW IN SYDNEY HARBOUR (Evening)

XXIII.
SYDNEY HARBOUR FROM BRADLEY'S HEAD

SHIRLOW
1917

XXIV.
VIEW OF DARLING HARBOUR, Sydney

SHIRLOW
1917

COMPLETE LIST OF ETCHINGS BY JOHN SHIRLOW

Date	TITLE	Edition
1895	EARLY MORNING, Lonsdale Street, Melbourne, at 6 a.m. The ground here shown is now covered with warehouses	—
1895	PRINCES BRIDGE	50
1896	A NARROW LANE ... ... *Zinc plate destroyed by corrosion*	
1896	THE COAL HULK ... ... *Various alterations have been made since the plate was first etched*	25
1898	TYNE FOUNDRIES, on River Yarra	20
1898	A BYWAY, Flinders Lane. In "Five Etchings." *Out of print*	
1898	PRINCES BRIDGE, from Morgue Landing Stage ...	25
1899	THE BALCONY. Street Scene at North Melbourne	20
1900	THE RIVERSIDE	20
1901	THE BRIDGE. In "Five Etchings." *Out of print*	
1901	THE RAILWAY CLOCK, on the site of the present Central Station, Melbourne	20
1901	WEST MELBOURNE SWAMP	20
1902	THE RIVER, from below Government House ... *Out of print*	50
1902	WAREHOUSES, MELBOURNE WHARVES ...	20
1904	AT ABBOTSFORD, on the Yarra. In "Five Etchings" ... ... *Out of print*	
1904	EASTERN HILL, showing a fine old Congregational Church, since demolished	20
1904	MELBOURNE FROM STUDLEY PARK. A trial of etching and mezzotint combined	20
1904	ST. MARY'S, West Melbourne	20
1904	THE AUGUST MOON. An evening effect at Northcote	20
1904	THE GAOL, Russell Street, Melbourne. In "Five Etchings" ... ... *Out of print*	
1904	A NUDE. Study at Victorian Artists' Society ... *Only four proofs exist*	

Date	TITLE	Edition
1905	BRIGHTON BEACH	20
1905	PASTURELANDS, Royal Park. In "Five Etchings" .. .. *Out of print*	
1906	A NUDE STUDY	50
1907	FROM IVANHOE, looking towards Melbourne ...	—
1907	AT IVANHOE	25
1907	DONCASTER TOWER, from Ivanhoe. The tower has since been removed, as being unsafe ...	20
1907	CARRUM BRIDGE. The old wooden bridge over Carrum Creek, now replaced by an iron structure	25
1907	IN ROYAL PARK	25
1907	CHINESE QUARTER, Little Bourke Street ... *Only three proofs exist*	
1908	ROYAL PARK. A view of sugar gums and the dome of the old Exhibition building	25
1908	THE LAW COURTS, Melbourne, 1908	25
1908	HAMPTON BEACH	25
1909	BASS SOLO, ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL. Looking across the Choir	25
1909	MUNDELL'S BOND	25
1909	SUGAR GUMS, Royal Park ... ... *Zinc plate destroyed by corrosion*	
1909	LITTLE DONCASTER. A fine view from Ivanhoe towards Doncaster	25
1909	BUILDING THE TOWER, Central Railway Station, Melbourne	50
1909	PORTRAIT OF ALF FISHER, Pastellist... ...	—
1910	FROM ROYAL PARK, looking towards Port Phillip Bay	25
1910	THE CENTRAL STATION. A view of the dome and principal entrance, from Swanston Street ...	50
1910	AT BEAUMARIS, looking towards Mentone ...	20
1910	THE SAW MILL. Anthony's Saw Mill, destroyed by fire, 1911	40
1911	AT YARRAVILLE, confluence of Saltwater and Yarra Rivers...	25
1911	ANGELUS AT ABBOTSFORD	

Date	TITLE	Edition
1912	PORTRAIT OF BERNARD O'DOWD, Esq. ...	25
1912	NIGHT EFFECT, Bowen Street, alongside Melbourne Gaol (Mezzotint)	10
1912	THE YARRA BANK	—
1913	THE IRON BRIDGE, South Yarra	24
1914	THE SLUM, Bullen Lane, in the Chinese Quarter ...	52
1914	THE LAW COURTS, with the rag-pickers ...	20
1914	THE FISHMARKET TOWER	50
1914	LATROBE PLACE, in Chinese Quarter (small plate)	20
1915	THE GREAT DOME, Central Railway Station, Melbourne	40
1915	THE CARRON IRON YARD, in Little Collins Street	20
1915	THE GOTHIC SPIRE, in Collins Street. An evening effect	50
1915	MELBOURNE. From South Yarra (Plate XVIII.)...	20
1915	MELBOURNE. Another view (Plate IV.) ...	
1915	LATROBE PLACE. Much the same as in the small plate (1914)	50
1916	BIG BOURKE STREET	25
1917	SYDNEY HARBOUR, from Bradley's Head ...	25
1917	VIEW IN SYDNEY HARBOUR, Evening ...	25
1917	VIEW OF DARLING HARBOUR, Sydney ...	25
1917	PORTRAIT OF J. G. ROBERTS, Esq.	20
1917	PORTRAIT OF R. H. CROLL, Esq.	25

Mr. Shirlow's Etchings may be viewed at the Mitchell Library, Sydney, and procured of fine art dealers in the capital cities. His direct representatives are Messrs. W. H. GILL (The Fine Art Society), Alfred Place, Melbourne, and H. J. FORD, 178 Castlereagh Street, Sydney.

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